



COMET CAPERS

Number 2 February 1979

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BRIGHTER BRIGHTON

The main policy of maximum advance brings many ups and downs in our operations. Last issue (No.1) the words about the ufoesper expedition to Great Britain were gloomy. Although numerous hurdles remain for a successful launch and return from Brighton, mission control finds much pleasure with recent unexpected turns of event. With some ingenious financing, the Prez and the Treasurer have shored up their personal resource crisis to the extent that I can now announce that Linda Strickler will confidently lead the delegation to Seacon 79 and CHRYSE-3. However much the strongest official representation would add to this effort, Graham Maughan will probably remain in North America to make final preparations for the delegation to Louisville, Kentucky for Northamericon at the end of August.

Why does the Board of Governors place such emphasis upon the Brighton/CHRYSE delegation, second only to that of Space Day 3? The adventure, the association with old friends, the weight of tradition are all present but minor reasons supporting the overseas expedition. The two most important arguments for Brighton are the economic use of scarce resources and the necessity for stronger international links in the Space Revolution to insure peace and prosperity in the Solar System. The economic argument can be seen both from the view of maximum advance (conventioning and the convocation are equally desirable) and the perspective of coincidental history (by chance the biggest spacer con is in England and coincidentally U.F.O.E.S.P. has a history of CHRYSEs with such spacer gatherings). Although essentially procedural gains, coupled with the crisis nature of international relations these economic understandings become convincing.

The crisis nature of international relations is almost too apparent to be either recapitulated or believed. Nonetheless some review of eruption or conflict aids focus on the revolutionary needs and problems at hand. China's invasion of Vietnam is the most spectacular of recent disintegrative developments but only give a garish, glarish background illumination to the careening politics of the Middle East. With rising slaughter spreading throughout southern Africa and ballooning economic dislocation from inflation and energy shortages, our civilization has reached the last moments of decision for its present generations as well as ages of posterity.

The United States and Soviet Union dominate space to such an extent that people easily lose sight of the broad nature of the Space Revolution. Most individuals, if they think about the issue, will recall that France, Japan, West Germany, or similar industrialized nations have space programs, not always modest. Fewer know that nations such as Indonesia, Zaire, or India have active efforts to exploit space. With such a broad basis of interest and commitment to space exploration and use, with the exploding world

conflict and deepening economic crisis, and with the grass-roots character of the Space Revolution firmly established, all signs point to tremendous international potential for the Space Revolution. The benefits of space to the most powerful nations do not diminish when applied to lesser developed countries. Thus, the arguments for such projects as reusable space vehicles, planetary surveys, or Martian settlement are the same no matter the country concerned. Logically, the easiest way to expand the space programs of the world is to expand the biggest ones, i.e., those of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. However, political factors, economic developments, or energy shortfalls, to name only a few outside considerations, could well disrupt or prevent full advantage being taken of logical possibilities. We should not hesitate to undertake revolutionary action out of vainglory or chauvinism. If we can spark Britain via cadres there to expand the national space effort, we succeed in our overall goals and mission. If we can catalyze Sweden to build space colonies through our political activism there, we fulfill our plans and dreams. If we can prompt Australia to take command of celestial resources, we advance all our visions and opportunities to live in space. The name of the game is new humanity and as the self-proclaimed vanguard of the new humans we have the heaviest obligation to transcend, if we can't crush, nationalism.

Spacers should be looking to Brighton and CHRYSE-3 as an unparalleled juncture in time. The official word is that 3,000 people have registered for the convention by January 1, 1979 with many hundreds of fen expected from North America alone. To put this in perspective one needs to recall that in the 40 years of worldcons 680 attendees was the maximum for a gathering "overseas." Many of those registered do not plan to attend but previous experience has shown that the majority of registrants do show up. Thus, we can expect at least 1,500 from all over the world at Brighton.

There are two things more important than numbers or international construction to consider. One is the positions which various leaders and activists have attained in fandom. Not only do we have many people who know their way about in this legion for the revolution, but the organization and many of us are becoming noteworthy in our own activist rights. It is imperative to maintain momentum now that we are on at least casual terms with the leaders and important segments of fandom. Brighton presents the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone: not only do we hold international cadre workshops in our flat (CHRYSE-3) but we solidify our contacts and notoriety within fandom at the same time. What a coup! Secondly, fen are unique among literati in that they are activists in publishing, editing, writing, and producing amateur literature. But the "amateurs" of the field frequently have years of experience with propaganda and more frequently move up in the ranks to professional positions. To seal an alliance with such a group of diverse and literate individuals is by no means sufficient for the futurian coalition but is the essential step for us as we are so close to its achievement. Everybody doesn't have to join U.F.O.E.S.P. as long as we can catalyze many others to work the common party line.

A final perspective on Seacon '79, CHRYSE, Brighton for your thinking caps is the precedence of the delegation to Britain as an expression of our support for cultural exchanges as a means to further the Space Revolution. The building of a new civilization fostered on new principles of humanity requires that each of us leave our nations behind, becoming children of Terra. The roiling times faced currently by the Space Revolution do not permit much attention to this form of struggle. But our philosophy of maximum advance provides the justification for layering yet another resource possibility into the operations. In reply to those who might say we are simply opportunistic, we reply, "Fully reptilian!" Our critics are right; we will take "all that is human" into space. But here or there we are still confronted by the implacable questions of proportion and control.

* GENERAL ACTIONS *

Brighton is only a piece of the action; let's take a look at some of the others. For the moment, the most important project is the Sixth Petition to the Peoples' Representatives. To date the major gathering effort took place at the International Fantasy Symposium in San Jose in mid-February. At this spacer event 450 or more people signed the petition. Cadres from around the country have returned sheets, bringing the total to 500 or so. We gathered 4,000 or more signatures on the Fifth Petition and there is no reason not to work for and expect thousands more than that on the Sixth. Circulation of the Petition will continue through Northamericon at least. This means that we have Disclave in Washington D.C., Westercon 32 in San Francisco, Space Day 3 in S.F., Seacon 79 in Brighton, England, and Northamericon in Louisville for certain to center major bursts of signature gathering on. In addition, Don Garvey is aiming to attend V-Con in Vancouver, Canada in May, Toad willing. No doubt other such double-barreled actions will present themselves in the months ahead.

Naturally, the realm of random-citizen gathering of signatures has potential equal to that of focus on science-fiction conventions. This sort of work has two parts: getting signatures from one's own circle and getting them from people on the street. Without question, accosting citizens in public places for signatures is the least pleasant, though sometimes most productive, form of petitioning. Thus we concentrate in U.F.O.E.S.P. on spacer events and private circles. Such petitioning is easier, even easy, because probability of success is high, interaction is usually pleasant, and the effort overlaps as a rule with other activities in the same setting. Every member has received a sheet of the Sixth and I earnestly urge each one of you on behalf of the Board of Governors to get them filled. There will be a lot of unexpected disappointments for most of us who gather; but the speed with which you can get a sheet filled is still amazing. This is particularly true in cases where the cadre is working another event or project. The secret to easy volunteer labor is mixing and matching many variously rewarding activities together. One must not understand this dictum only in the context of special efforts for the Space Revolution. One's personal life should get confused with the issue. This results not only in more serious attention to the work at hand but also, more importantly, smooths the efforts so that they feel, as they are, beneficial and rewarding.

There are peak periods for petitioning but the work continues to have tremendous significance until it stops. Petitioning is perhaps the easiest political labor the organization does or requests of its cadres. Yet it has one of the most visible impacts on those the petitions are supposed to affect. The sight of thousands of signatures for space in this time of assault on space and the future must be eye-brow raising if not head-turning for the President, Congresspeople, Governors, and the like. Because we number the petitions we sponsor, each one builds on all its predecessors in a way far more noticeable than separate or obviously distinct petitions do. Petitions are the voice of the people as much as telegrams, telephone calls, or polls are. Important, inexpensive, and representative work makes for powerful work. Let's pile up signatures on that Sixth Petition!

Similar to petitioning but significantly more expensive is conventioning. Combining many actions at once, conventioning runs for an extended period, concentrating on the time of February to October. There are many kinds of conventions and conventioning but this year our attention is on science-fiction, as usual, major regional, not so usual, ones. We are paying most attention to the bigger cons not only because they clearly have bigger results

but because we have finally reached the stage where we have enough cadres spread around the country with sufficient resources to concentrate on bigger gatherings (in other days we have had to work the closest cons, no matter the size). Carrie Mayfield, Alex Whitaker, and Don Garvey, among others, have made all the difference in the world with this sort of con.

And this sort of con is lots of fun. Rest and relaxation in the Space Revolution must come within the work itself. Now, the reader should not misunderstand that remark to mean that rest and relaxation must be the work itself. Rather, the moments of leisure and reward come interspersed between one activity and another. This relationship is best made use of at sf cons because they are so exotic and loose. Partying continues all night, most of the day, while there are numerous films, panels, trippy people to experience when the revolutionary going gets rough, ragged, or restless. The hours devoted to the work itself are not onerous because they are shared with comrades and possible people for the Revolution. Every individual is a remarkable experience! The psychotherapy alone of revolutionary work is worth the trouble at conventions!

Only a few lines left so I can do hardly more than mention Space Day 3. Response is a little wierd but nonetheless progressive. We must simply pull out all the stops and let history judge the consequences. All manner of acts and activities are in store for the 10th anniversary of the first lunar landing. Various sections of AIAA, L-5 Society, NASA and other educational groups plan celebrations, mostly dinners and conferences from what they report. If U.F.O.E.S.P. stages Space Day 3 ten times more successfully than Space Day 2 (tremendous achievement!), we will trigger the political discussion, controversy, debate and action that will make space the BIG ISSUE of the '80 elections. Don't feel competitive with the other spacer groups, comrades; they provide the critical mass for our stellar explosion. ###jgm

UNITED FOR OUR EXPANDED SPACE PROGRAMS
P.O. Box 14585, SANTA BARBARA
CA93107 U.S.A.

To: _____

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